

THE CATHOLIC RADICAL

"...to foster a society based on creed instead of greed." Peter Maurin

December/January 2011-12

Price: For whatever it's worth.

A Baby Is Born

by Dorothy Day

Editor's Note: This article is reprinted from the January, 1941, issue of The Catholic Worker. The author, along with Peter Maurin, co-founded the Catholic Worker movement in 1933.

It is January 9, 1941, and *The New York Times* this morning is filled with news of total war and total defense. Every day four-column headlines of the costs of war: "1942 Budget \$17,485,528,049. Funds for British to Be Sought Later."

Wonder what that \$49 tacked on at the end of the \$17,485,528,000 is for? Fifty dollars, we know, will pay for a baby, if you are poor, at any hospital in the city. A flat rate of fifty dollars, ward care, the ministrations of any doctor that happens to be on hand, and ten days' hospitalization.

At Bellevue Hospital, if you are poor, if you are a resident of the great City of New York, it doesn't cost a cent.

William, our new baby down here at Mott Street, is hearby headlined on our front page, as the biggest news of the month, the gayest news, the most beautiful news, the most tragic news, and indeed more worthy of a place in a headline than the seventeen billion, four hundred and eighty-five million, five hundred and twenty-eight thousand, and forty-nine dollars headlined in *The New York Times* this morning. William himself is worth more than that sum, more indeed than all the money in the world. He is indeed but dust, the Lord knoweth it, but he is also little less than the angels. He is a creature of body and soul, a son of God and (by his baptism down at Transfiguration Church last Sunday at 2 A.M.) a temple of the Holy Ghost. For his sake our Lord God came down from Heaven, was begotten by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, was

made man, lived with us for thirty-three years, and suffered and laid down His life. For William's sake as well as for the sake of each one of us.

And this tiny creature who little realizes his dignity as a member of the Mystical Body of Christ lies upstairs from me now



S. Jude

as I write, swaddled in a blanket and reposing in a laundry basket. He is rosy and calm and satisfied, a look of infinite peace and complacency upon that tiny countenance. He little knows what is in the world, what horrors beset us on every side.

We had awaited his arrival, the week before Christmas, breathlessly. Every night before we went to bed we asked the young mother, "How do you feel?" and asked each other (us women on the two top floors of St. Joseph's House on Mott

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Where Do You Stand?

by Ken Hannaford-Ricardi

A wal Khan will never thank the US for its military intervention in Afghanistan. On an April day he will never forget, Khan, a brigadier artillery officer in the Afghan National Army, stationed in the eastern province of Khost, received word that virtually his entire family had been killed by US forces. Slain were Khan's brother; his wife; a 17-year-old daughter, Nadia; and Aimal, his 15 year-old-son. A second daughter was wounded. Colonel Greg Julian, a US military spokesman, later termed the incident an "unfortunate set of circumstances."

On the evening of the killings, US forces conducting a night raid targeted what they believed to be four terrorists holed up in a house. The soldiers' plan called for them to wait until very late and then attack the hideout. The house they struck was Khan's.

As part of the American action, a group of soldiers was positioned on the flat roof of an adjoining house, hoping to prevent the escape of anyone attempting to flee as the attack got underway. And it was directly to the roof that Khan's family fled, perhaps fearing the rampaging soldiers were armed robbers.

There has been considerable vocal debate about the killing of civilians during the decade-long war in Afghanistan. Some of these deaths are inevitable during war, but legitimate questions have been raised about so-called "targeted" killings, aimed at eliminating one or more known or suspected anti-coalition terrorists. The mistaken slaughter of Brigadier Khan's family seems to fall into this category. Or was

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A Baby is Born

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Street), "Is there taxi money?" in case it would be too late to call an ambulance.

And then, one morning at five, I heard rapid footsteps in the room above, the voice of the ambulance intern in the hall, "I'll be waiting downstairs." And I realized that the great moment had arrived.

It was still dark out, but it was indubitably morning. Lights were on in the kitchens of surrounding tenements. Fish peddlers, taxi drivers, truckmen, long-shoremen, were up and on their way to work. The business of life was beginning. And I thought, "How cheerful to begin to have a new baby at this time of the morning!" Not at 2 A.M., for instance, a dreary time of low vitality, when people sink beneath their woes and courage flags. Five o'clock is a cheerful hour.

Down in our little back yard (where we had the Christmas tree this year), down in that cavernous pit with tenements loom-

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52 Mason Street, Worcester, MA 01610 Telephone: (508) 753-3588, 753-3089

Email: thereseCW2@gmail.com

Founded in 1933, The Catholic Worker is a lay movement serving the poor while denouncing injustice and proclaiming peace. We are not tax exempt. We rely entirely on the generosity of our supporters to meet our expenses. We welcome volunteers, letters, poetry, articles, artwork, and donations.

sliced, pasty, puffy white bread for us), getting out the cups, preparing the coffee for our eight hundred or so breakfast guests.

Out in front the line was forming already and two or three fires in the gutters brought out in sharp relief the haggard faces of the men, the tragedy of their rags. The bright flames, the blue-black sky, the

grey buildings all about, everything sharp and clear, and this morning, a white ambulance drawn up in front of the door.

This is not the story of the tragedy of the mother. We are not going into details about that. But I could not help thinking that while I was glad the morning was beginning, it was a miserable shame that the departure of the young woman for her ordeal should be witnessed by a long, silent waiting line of men. They surveyed her, a slight figure, bundled on that cruelly cold morning (and pain and fear make the blood run cold), come running down from the dark, silent house to get into the ambulance.

wondering perhaps as they watched the ambulance, whether it was life or death that had called it out.

"This is worse than war," one woman friend said a few days before, contemplating the situation. And we agreed, wondering if anything indeed could be more desperate and sad than a woman left to have her child alone.

There you have the tragedy of the refugee, there you have the misery of homelessness, the uncertainty as to food and clothing and shelter (and this woman had known hunger). And there, too, you have the pain and agony of the flesh. No soldier with his guts spilled out on the battlefield, lying for hours impaled upon barbed wire, suffers physically more than a woman in childbirth. Physically, I say, because does not the soldier in his horror and pain wonder what has brought him to this pass—what is being accomplished by the gigantic agony of war? With the woman the suffering brought forth life. In war, death. And despite shame and fear and uncertainty, as in this case, still there cannot but be joy over a child born into the world.

So it is with joy that we announce the newcomer to our House of Hospitality on Mott Street, knowing that our readers who have suffered with us in the past will be glad to rejoice with us now.

For us most truly this has been a season of happiness. **"For unto us a son is born, unto us a child is given."** Christ Himself came so truly to us this Christmas Day in this baby boy, just as in the persons of the hungry men. **"For inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."** Ω



ing five and seven stories up around, we could hear them dragging out the ash cans, bringing in the coffee cans for the line.

Peter Clark and his crew were on hand, cutting pumpnickel (none of this already

Not one man, not a dear husband, nor a protector on whom she could lean for comfort and strength. There was no Joseph on this winter morning. But there were hundreds of men, silent, waiting and

Confessions of a Hypochondriac

by Scott Schaeffer-Duffy

In the movie “Hannah and Her Sisters,” Woody Allen tries to convince a skeptical friend that his ailments are not imaginary by saying, “Don’t you remember that black spot on my back?” She rolls her eyes and reminds him, “That was on your shirt.”

My great aunt Ella was “dying” for more than 25 years. She fired one doctor who had the nerve to tell her that he knew patients with worse heart conditions who were working full time, but she mostly enjoyed unending sympathy from medical “professionals” who reassured her that she was not well.

I never understood Ella’s obsession as an adolescent, but I think I do now. During my Charlie Brown days, before I met my good wife Claire, I often proclaimed, “If you can’t get love and respect, go for pity.” And nothing engenders pity better than an injury or disease.

Of course, real injury and disease are pretty unpleasant, sometimes so much so that pity is not much of a salve, so I have given up that approach and shifted to a campaign for plain old-fashioned attention.

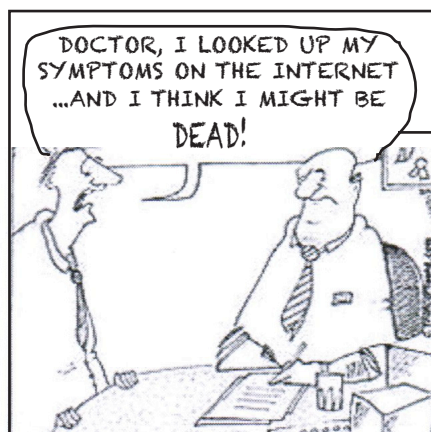
While others sit in doctors’ waiting rooms quietly reading magazines, I give my anxiety a throat mike. I usually begin with the receptionist, whom I ask, “What are the odds that I will die here today?” That lays my cards right on the table. When told to take a seat, I usually reply, “No thanks, I’d rather just pace nervously,” which I do.

At a recent appointment, where my doctor sent me to receive an MRI to rule out cancer on my spine, I made them change the TV channel each time the word “cancer” was used. You’d be surprised how often that is, by the way. After they ordered me to dress in what they called a “johnny” (I called it a shroud), I was escorted to a small waiting room. The nurse had scarcely gotten out the door before I shouted, “CANCER!” When she rushed back, she found me pointing to a magazine whose cover story was on the dreadful disease. The unsympathetic nurse said, “That’s about ovarian cancer. I think you’re safe.”

Oh, how the healthy love to sneer.

Now, you may well say, “If your doctor sent you for an MRI, surely something must actually be wrong with you.” Not necessarily. I have a reputation for crying wolf. Years ago, we inherited a **Merck’s Medical Manual** (the hypochondriac’s best friend). When I experience any symptom, I grab that hefty red volume and look up the possible causes. Oftentimes, there is a range of suggestions, from the innocuous to the deadly. I chose to focus on the latter.

Before the introduction of MassHealth, I used to call a nurse practitioner friend of mine at the Homeless Outreach whenever I suspected an ailment. I called early and often, as they say. One time, I left the message, “I’m having a heart attack!” Another nurse, who did not know me, panicked because I left no contact info. When my



friend came in, she recognized my voice and said, “Ignore that. It’s nothing.” As it turned out, my cardiac arrest was gas.

But then there was that dark and stormy night when I felt abdominal pain and asked Claire to take me to the hospital. She demurred, as most sensible people would, but when my whining persisted into the wee hours, she finally relented and dumped me at the emergency room saying, “Call me later when they tell you it’s nothing.” I dragged myself to the check-in window and then curled up on the floor in a fetal position writhing in agony until I was examined. After five hellish hours, they removed my appendix. On my way to the operating room, I told the orderly pushing my gurney to step back because I expected an alien to leap out of my abdomen. After

my surgery, a resident told me that my appendix had micro-burst and I could have died. I cannot tell you how many times since then I have reminded those skeptics of my ailments, “I almost died once.”

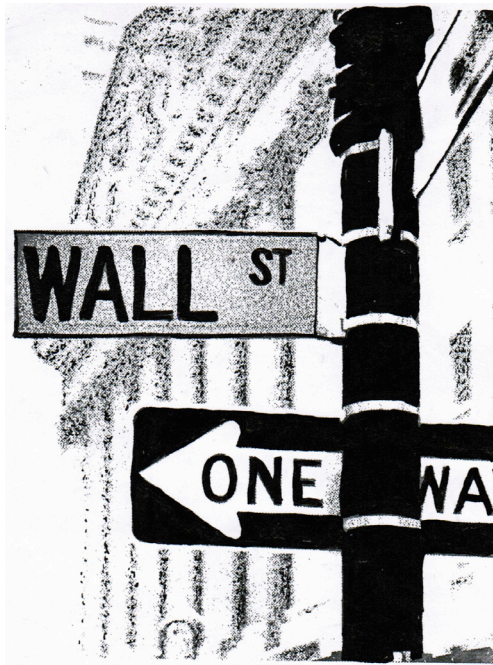
More recently, after many normal physicals, I have been diagnosed with all kinds of problems. Apparently I now suffer from a very low pulse due to a first degree atrio-ventricular blockage, as well as, kidney stones, early osteo-arthritis, diverticulosis, basal cell cancer, and lesions on the spine. I have no symptoms whatsoever. In fact, the only discomforts I’ve experienced are from the CT scan, colonoscopy, cystoscopy, flouroscopy, and MRIs I’ve endured. (A word to the wise, if a doctor suggests any test that ends in “oscopy,” say “NO!”) I’ve heard horror stories about these conditions. As a precaution, I’m supposed to stay out of the sun, drink gallons of water, avoid cucumbers, strawberries, and popcorn, and submit to a periodic EKG and MRI.

These diagnoses arrived just in time for my 35th high school reunion, a kind of a convention for sharing healthcare woes. You’d be surprised how many people my age have already died, not to mention how many have suffered hair loss, weight gain, and diminishing eyesight. Unfortunately, my complaints got lost in the shuffle. I was forced to live in the moment and enjoy my old friends’ company.

There’s the rub. My aunt Ella wasted so many years in her “sick” bed missing the joys of life. My grandmother told me that, in her youth, Ella was vivacious and fun. In the years I knew her, she seemed self-obsessed and sad. Who would chose that over the joys of life?

Now, don’t get me wrong, I still plan to make a spectacle of myself at the doctor’s, but I’ve got too many other marvelous people and experiences begging for my attention to waste time dwelling on my health. As John Gunter’s son says in **Death Be Not Proud**, an account of the teenager’s slow death from brain cancer, “Live while you live, and then die and be done with it.” Why die over and over? The sun is out. I think I’ll go running with my son Aiden. Ω

Scenes from Occupy Worcester



The Occupy Wall Street movement sprang out of outrage at the scandalous concentration of wealth and its domination of politics. It quickly spread to more than 30 American cities, including Worcester, and inspired protests in London and Rome.





Members of Occupy Worcester calling Bank of America customers to move their money to smaller banks or credit unions.



Where You Stand

(Continued from Page 1)

their deaths an example of indiscriminate killing? Did American troops open fire at anyone who appeared on that rooftop? Did anyone stop to doubt if those four frightened people actually were terrorists? Many would claim that this was what occurred. No one wondered; no one cared.

The co-founder of Voices for Creative Nonviolence, Kathy Kelly, is fond of observing, "Where you stand determines what you see." The soldiers waiting across from the Khan home that fateful evening probably did not see the killing of those emerging onto that roof as anything more than a tragic, horrible mistake. Mr. Khan's neighbors, though, probably saw those same killings in an entirely different light.

Soldiers in battle are often themselves caught in a crossfire. On one side are the senior officers who issue orders; on the other, those intimately, at times fatally, affected by these commands. Aside from incidents – and there may be many more than have appeared in the press – such as the well-documented "Kill Team" murders in southern Afghanistan, during which the perpetrators operated outside all bounds of military and moral law, most soldiers are not privy to the reasons behind the orders they receive. And they are taught not to

ask those reasons.

Outrages such as those carried out by participants in the "Kill Team" murders or by US soldiers at the My Lai massacre are correctly labeled inexcusable attacks against innocent citizens. Much as we might wish it were the case, however, the same cannot be said of the soldiers who



Käthe Kollwitz

killed officer Khan's family. If anyone on that rooftop questioned the morality of what he was ordered to do, he was obligated to refuse to fire his gun. Apparently none of them did.

Whether an attack can be labeled "indiscriminate" rests largely on the intent of those ordering, and in some cases carrying out, the assault. In the instance of the NATO helicopter gunners who killed nine children gathering firewood in the moun-

tains near their village in eastern Afghanistan in March of this year, the only people who know for a certainty whether the attack was indiscriminate violence against the innocent or a decision to fire on what they thought was a group of insurgents are the soldiers themselves. No matter how many times we view the video or read the eye-witness statements, only those inside those helicopters know why they fired. The rest of us can do is guess.

Whether indiscriminate acts of violence are committed – many times over – during this or any war no one has to ask. Unfortunately, all we have to do is listen to the news in order to realize this type of behavior is everywhere, in our homes, on the streets, or on the battlefield. One thing is for certain, though. Attacks such as these can never be attributed to "battle fatigue" or a few "bad apples" who somehow found their way into the military. There is no scientific way of determining who is going to perpetrate such killings. The only way to eliminate them is to eschew war as a way of solving conflicts. That won't be just a start; it will mark an end as well. Ω

Editor's Note: The author, a long-time member of the Saints Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker, will make his second trip to Afghanistan from December 11 - January 11. Please keep him and the people of Afghanistan in your prayers.

Letters

Dear Claire and Scott,

Thanks for the October/November *Catholic Radical* with its great articles, pictures, poetry, and letters. I especially appreciate the review of Donald Spoto's **The Reluctant Saint** and the excerpt on holiness. This is the best, and most forgiving definition of forgiveness that I have ever seen, one that triggers one of those light-bulb moments.

"Urine Trouble?" brought back memories of my visit to Anatoth Farm for its 30th (?) anniversary and the annual vigil/civil disobedience at the ELF (nuclear weapons guidance) facility in the spectacular great woods of northern Wisconsin. Those people (Catholic Workers in general) know to have FUN! — The beauty, hilarity, and hedonism (as in home-made ice cream at the demo, a four-hour drive away through immense maples and pines and a stop for beer on the way back. This is after all Wisconsin). The anniversary dinner for 100+ under tents under a rainstorm, illuminated by tiki torches, featured fresh-picked (from the farm) asparagus soup as an appetizer. That morning, as we were setting up, up rose the asparagus soup, raising the lid a foot or two. Down it flowed like oobleck. Miraculously (one expects miracles in Luck) there were oodles left, more than enough for the crowd, and we cleaned the kitchen in what seemed like effortless speed. Such exuberant soup!

I love your April Fools issues—maybe you could do some non-seasonal issues featuring the joy and beauty and laughter amidst CW communities? That seems the secret of your steadfastness and generosity—Catholic Workers know how to have FUN!

In gratitude to all you holy fools,

Jeanie Shaterian
Berkeley, California

Dear Friends at the Catholic Radical,

I've read at least 500 clones of Ms. Maguire's letter to the President (Aug/Sept *Catholic Radical*), to the point where I'm really sick and tired of them, and wonder why on earth people still

read them or publish them.

"Dear Mr. President,

You came into office on such glorious promise to the world of peace, justice, hope, and change. But you have sadly let us down on this, and this, and this, and that, and that, and that, and that.

Nonetheless, Mr. President, we still worship the ground you walk on and will follow you to the ends of the earth. There is no one whose mission for the world we trust more than yours,

Sincerely,

The Great Frozen-for-All-Time Liberal Community"

Barack Obama is human heroin. You can be lying on the floor in the convulsions of death, but you have to go back and shoot up one more time. You can watch a tragedy of the magnitude of Vietnam unfold, but you have to go back for one more fix.

As upset as I sound—and I am—I'm certainly not angry with a single one of you at the Catholic Worker. I know what wonderful people you are and what devotion you have to the mandates of Scripture. It just breaks my heart when people are unable to look the truth in the face.

Sincerely,

Arthur Wortman
Kansas City, Missouri

Dear Scott and Claire,

...I was glad to read your "Mason Street Musings" column in the October/November issue. I, too, feel hopeful about the world, despite everything that's going on. Saint John saw "a new heaven and a new earth"! We all do our small part; where would we be without hope?

Bernard Connaughton
New York, New York

Dear Scott and family,

...It's really good that you're getting the message out that it's not OK to be glad about the killing of anyone. The hatred

that is bred by mainstream media often leaves me feeling literally nauseous.

It was lovely to have Claire's flavor in the August/September Mason Street Musings. It was sad though to hear of Talib's passing. Thanks for being there for him, Claire....

Sheri Ellery
New Zealand

Hi Scott,

I pulled this ad out of an old 1905 magazine I picked up at a yard sale. Thought you might find it interesting. Things haven't changed much have they?

Peace,

Roger Stanley
Berlin, Massachusetts

JUNE 1905 THE

4TH of JULY

You want a good noise maker. Don't risk your life fooling with a toy pistol, but buy a

Young America

Double Action

Revolver

\$2.50

Safe Reliable Durable

22 Caliber, 7 Shot, Rim Fire.
32 Caliber, 5 Shot, Rim or Center Fire.

If not to be had of your dealer write us, stating preference and enclosing amount, and we will supply you by return mail or express, sending prepaid.

Write for Free Catalog.

HARRINGTON & RICHARDSON
ARMS CO.
372 PARK AVE.
WORCESTER, MASS.

Editor's Note: Harrington and Richardson Arms company used to be located only two blocks from our house. Ironically, our annual Saint Patrick's Day parade peace vigil is held in front of where the gun manufacturer's building once stood. The business that occupies the site now makes donuts.

Ten Years Too Many

by Matt Daloisio

As the prison at Guantánamo approaches its tenth year, we are faced with a choice. We can wipe our eyes, concede defeat, and walk away from human rights, the rule of law, and the men at Guantánamo and Bagram detained without charge or fair trial. Or we can rise up anew to say not to torture and call for the closure of Guantánamo, accountability for the torturers, and justice for the victims of US abuse.

Join us in Washington, DC on January 11, 2012 for a protest against US detention policies — by far the biggest such demonstration since the “War on Terror” began. Human rights organizations, legal collectives, grassroots groups, and people of conscience everywhere are rallying to form a human chain from the White House to Congress and to demand real change. Be a part of this historic day!

From January 2 - 14, Witness Against Torture will fast and engage in daily activities to highlight the ongoing crimes of Guantánamo, Bagram, indefinite detention, and lack of accountability. Let us know if you can join the community for what is always a powerful time together.

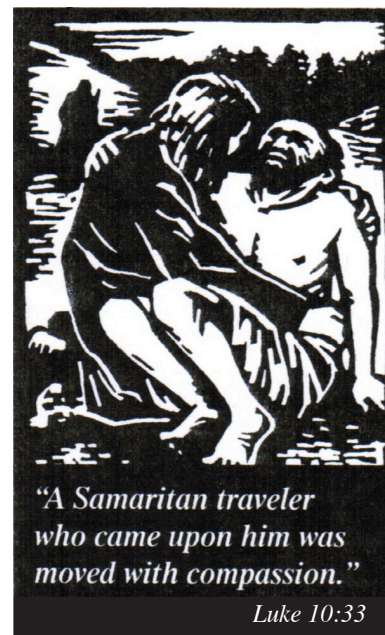


Also, on January 3, 14 friends begin a jury trial in Washington, DC stemming from a June arrest in the House of Representatives Gallery. Please come to support these good folks as they try to put Guantánamo itself on trial. Ω

Editor's Note: For more information: www.witnesstorture.org. For transportation from Worcester email theresecw2@gmail.com or call 508 753-3588.

Christ in the Stranger's Guise

I saw a stranger yestereen;
I put food in the eating place,
Drink in the drinking place,
Music in the listening place;
And in the blessed name of the Triune
He blessed myself and my house,
My cattle and my dear ones.
And the lark said in her song
Often, often, often,
Goes the Christ in the stranger's guise,
Often, often, often,
Goes the Christ in the stranger's guise. Ω



Julie Lommeman

Catholic Worker Calendar



Janina Lamb

December, 12 & January 9, 23—Mass: Please join us in prayer and song. 7:30 P.M., 52 Mason Street. Refreshments to follow.

December 18 — Christmas Caroling: Please join us at 52 Mason Street for our annual caroling at a nursing home and in our neighborhood. Gather at 5:30 P.M.. Mulled cider and Christmas cookies will be served afterwards.

December 2 & January 6—Consistent Life Vigil: Please join our monthly vigil against war and abortion. Noon - 1 P.M., Military Recruiting Station, 255 Park Avenue, and Planned Parenthood, 470 Pleasant Street, Worcester.

December 15 & January 19—Ta'anit Tzedek: Jewish Fast for Gaza Prayer Vigil: Please join us in a Jewish prayer and fast for an end to the Israeli siege on Gaza. Noon-1 P.M. In front of Clark University on Main Street, Worcester.

For More Information: Call 508 753-3588

Mason Street Musings

The requests for hospitality here at the Catholic Worker are far outpacing what we can provide. Some weeks, we average four calls a day from people in need. This may not seem like a lot to big-city-dwellers, but Worcester is a modest-sized city where problems like crime and homelessness have been of manageable proportions. In the past, when we refused people, we took comfort knowing another shelter could meet the need. This is no longer true.

In a futile attempt to stem the flow of homeless people coming in from surrounding towns, or distant states, Worcester's only drop-in shelter is requiring proof-of-residence. Beds are available for those who can show they have resided in the city for two years, out-of-towners are frequently turned away. The state agency that approves assistance for women and children—a prerequisite for getting into one of the city's family shelters—has also become more discriminating. The cutbacks combined with an increase in unemployment and foreclosures mean there are more and more people with fewer places to go.

"I am getting so many requests for shelter and have no place to put people," a good-hearted woman from the city's Human Rights Commission told me the other day. I was surprised to learn the homeless were going to her office whose mission is to address complaints of discrimination.

We point no fingers. We ourselves are limited in what we do, offering hospitality

to some and refusing others. We took in C. who is in legal trouble and complains that he cannot get assistance at the local social service agencies, but not the hospitalized construction worker. We welcomed the teen who was sleeping in the woods behind the high school he attends, but when the guidance counselor asked if we could take in another homeless youth, we said no. We



Fritz Eichenberg

prepared a bed for S. but could not help the pregnant mother with the 8-year-old son, or the sweet couple who showed up at the door.

"That's all right," they said, smiling after we refused them.

We know institutional charity is not the solution. People need a living wage, dignified employment, affordable education, housing, and healthcare. They also need to realize that all of us, as Peter Maurin would put it, "are co-creators with God," called to labor for the Common Good.

But you can't preach or talk policy change to the woman on the phone who tells you she left her place because of violent threats and is drifting from one

friend's couch to another and just needs a stable refuge until she finds work.

Here at the Catholic Worker, we are asking ourselves if there is more we can do for the poor around us. Eight of us call Mason Street home, leaving only three beds available for guests needing short-term hospitality. Do we need to get an apartment? "Hospitality requires people who can attend to the house," Jane Sammon of the New York Catholic Worker rightfully reminds me. I marvel at the exuberant faith of the St. Louis Catholic Workers who, after noting their bed shortage in the midst of growing need, invite "a community" to come to their fair city and open a house. I confess the thought of expanding our hospitality makes me quake. More people around. More dishes to wash. More beds to make. *Really?* But then I read the words of the poet Rumi:

*Find the real world, give it endlessly away,
grow rich flinging your gold to all who ask.
Live at the empty heart of paradox – I'll
dance there with you cheek-to-cheek.*

So dear readers, pray for us as we discern how to respond to the growing number of homeless in our city. Consider how you might cultivate hospitality during these hard times by offering a meal, a bed, a "Christ Room," perhaps, for the poor outsider in your community. The "real world" is to be found in the unfathomable generosity of the Child in the manger. So fling your gold to all who ask. And grow rich. Ω

Claire

SS. Francis & Thérèse Catholic Worker
52 Mason Street
Worcester, MA 01610
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